

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 16765

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 16765 VICE 1676T)

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: INDIAN PARLIAMENT MEETS JANUARY 5

1. THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT WILL BEGIN ITS WINTER SESSION ON JANUARY 5, SEVEN WEEKS LATER THAN IT USUALLY COMMENCES AND JUST A MONTH AHEAD OF THE SIX-MONTH CONSTITUTIONAL DEADLINE DATING FROM THE LAST PARLIAMENTARY SESSION. INFORMED SOURCES STATE THAT THE WINTER SESSION WILL PROBABLY TERMINATE ON JANUARY 30, AND BE FOLLOWED BY A BUDGET SESSION FROM MID-FEBRUARY TO MID-MARCH. THIS SCHSDULE, IF FOLLOWED, WOULD RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN EARLY 1976.

2. GOI PRESS RELEASES AND CONGRESS MP SOURCES STATE THAT THE WINTER SESSION WILL BE "NORMAL," AS OPPOSED TO THE LAST HECTIC SESSION WHICH WAS ALMOST TOTALLY DEVOTED TO PASSING AMENDMENTS AND LEGISLATION DESIGNED TO EXPULCATE THE PRIME MINISTER FROM HER LEGAL DIFFICULTIES AND FORMALIZE GOI EMERGENCY POWERS. THERE WILL

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PAGE 02 NEW DE 16765 172234Z

BE A QUESTION-HOUR. (THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE

UPPER HOUSE TOLD EMBOFFS DEC 16 THAT THERE WOULD BE CAREFUL MONITORING OF MP QUESTIONS TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT TO THE GOVERNMENT.) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS, INCLUDING CALLING ATTENTION MOTIONS AND THE PROPOSAL OF BILLS, WILL BE ALLOWED. PARLIAMENT WILL PASS INTO LAW A STACK OF 22 ORDINANCES THAT HAVE PILED UP SINCE THE LAST SESSION. BKA SUMMARY OF THE ORDINANCES IS BEING POUCHED TO NEA/INS.) THERE ARE ALSO 25 OFFICIAL BILLS PENDING BEFORE THE TWO HOUSES. THE PRESS WILL ATTEND, ALTHOUGH A RECENT ORDINANCE STRIPPED JOURNALISTS OF IMMUNITY IN REPORTING PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

3. THERE WILL BE A PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO A JOINT SITTING OF BOTH HOUSES ON JANUARY 5 IN WHICH SOME OF THE TOUCHY ISSUES BEFORE THIS SESSION MAY BE RAISED. THE GOVERNMENT MUST INTRODUCE A BILL EXTENDING THE LIFE OF PARLIAMENT, IF ELECTIONS ARE TO BE POSTPONED. SIMILAR BILLS WILL HAVE TO BE INTRODUCED WITH REGARD TO THE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR THE TAMIL NADU AND KERALA STATE LEGISLATURES. GOI BILLS ON PARLIAMENTARY REFORM ARE ALSO EXPECTED. THE POSITION OF GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN DURING DEBATES ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY, POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND THE RESTORATION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES WILL BE CLOSELY FOLLOWED AS INDICATORS OF GOI'S INTENTIONS IN THESE AREAS. THE POSSIBLE EXTENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS EXPECTED TO BE INTRODUCED DURING THE WINTER SESSION WAS REVIEWED IN NEW DELHI 16634.

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